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The Engineer's Bookshelf

By Wilson R. Dumble

LONG REMEMBER—*MacKinlay Kantor*—Coward-McCann (\$2.50).

THE GORGEOUS HUSSY—*Samuel Hopkins Adams*—Houghton Mifflin (\$2.50).

THE EVIL EMPRESS—*Grand Duke Alexander of Russia*—Lippincott (\$2.00).

STRANGE HARVEST—*Inez Haynes Irwin*—Bobbs-Merrill (\$2.50).

DOCTOR MARTINO—*William Faulkner*—Harrison Smith and Robert Haas (\$2.50).

ULYSSES—*James Joyce*—Random House (\$3.50).

PWAP AND THE NAVY

There has been trouble in the world of art and letters during the last few weeks. Especially has there been trouble in the world of art, and as the result of this trouble some of the generals of the Army are not speaking to some of the admirals of the Navy. The entire affair is the direct result of a picture painted by Paul Cadmus, a PWAP artist of Manhattan, who was commissioned to "do" a piece of work for the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington. Mr. Cadmus, it seems, took for his theme sailors on leave in New York City, and he shows five or six of them meeting lady friends on Riverside Drive. Moreover, Mr. Cadmus had the very poor taste—at least in the eyes of the Navy—to entitle his picture "The Fleet's In."

When Admiral Rodman saw a cut of the mural in the *Washington Evening Sun*, he immediately sat down at his desk and penned a line or two to Secretary of Navy Swanson, calling the picture "a most disgraceful, sordid, disreputable brawl, wherein apparently a number of enlisted men are consorting with a party of streetwalkers and denizens." When, later, Secretary Swanson himself examined the Cadmus painting, he scratched his chin and tilted his head to remark: "Right artistic but not true to the Navy." After that, Assistant Secretary of Navy Roosevelt took "The Fleet's In" to his Washington home and it is still under cover there.

Of course I have not seen the painting, but I have seen a reproduction of it in *Time*, and personally I cannot see anything either attractive or immoral about the picture. All I do know is that I have seen similar collections of humans on Riverside Drive when the fleet was anchored in the North River, and if the Secretary of the Navy and if Admiral Rodman believe it is not true to the Navy, they have another guess coming. But, of course, I suppose that admirals would not know what went on

when the fleet was in port at New York. Those admirals, as boys, left exclusive preparatory schools for Annapolis, graduated after four years, married wealthy girls and settled down in nice officers' quarters. When their fleet has been anchored in the North River, no doubt they have been whisked away in a Rolls-Royce to a splendid apartment at the Ambassador, have dined at Pierre's, have had cocktails at the Ritz bar, and have danced to the tunes of Eddie Duchin at Central Park Casino. It is the enlisted man who wanders far and wide on the boulevards of New York, and who inspired Mr. Cadmus when he painted the picture.

SHAWN AND STEIN

Several weeks ago when I was spending a few days in Cleveland I noticed that the press of that city was devoting some lines to an incident that had taken place before my arrival. It seemed that Ted Shawn, an exponent of the modern dance, had given a recital there one evening in the Public Auditorium, and that during the performance a group of young men from Kent State College who were in attendance, snickered at some of the antics of Mr. Shawn during his dances. Of course it was rather rude of those gentlemen from Kent to snicker in that fashion, but if I remember correctly, several years ago, when I saw Mr. Shawn with Miss Ruth St. Dennis in their modern dancing, there were more than snickers in the audience. I believe I remember cat calls and the like.

Modern dancing, such as it is, has never appealed to me. I have always thought that it was the easiest of the modern arts to fake. A chorus girl, for example, must go through all sorts of rigorous training to learn a labyrinth of steps and to try to keep in unison with the other ladies of the ensemble. But with modern dancing, especially of the kind put on by Mr. Shawn, all one needs is the determination to appear before the public, several yards of colored cheese cloth, a spot light and a little wierd music. Then it is, that the modern dance passes as art, and one has to be dreadfully careful or he is "raked" in by the so-called artist.

Not many exponents of the modern dance have been successful in this country. Nijinski, that remarkably athletic person who hailed from Russia fifteen years ago, was just about the only man to show that he had talent enough to tell his story by means of the dance.

It seems to me that there is no necessary merit in widening the medium of expression. Certainly Gertrude

Stein has not done much to widen the medium of expression as used by Shakespeare. In fact she has made it more vague and certainly less beautiful. For instance I should rather hear some of those splendid lines from *Hamlet* or *The Merchant* than the following by Miss Stein:

Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet tea.

Susie Asado.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet tea.

Susie Asado.

Susie Asado which is a told tray sure.

A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers.

Now that quotation is Gertrude Stein, Stein at her best, which no doubt, is Stein at her worst. In that verse, so I am told, Miss Stein is translating the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible. Also I am told, that out of her early experiments has sprung all modern writing. Well, well, I say to myself; if that is modern writing I'll take Shakespeare. And if Ted Shawn's performance is modern dancing, I'll take—let me see—well, probably the Merry Widow Waltz.

LONG REMEMBER

The history novels are upon us again, no doubt, they are the result of Mr. Allen and his *Anthony Adverse*. In the last couple months several fine historical novels have been published, the best, in all probability being *Long Remember* by MacKinlay Kantor. *Long Remember* is a magnificent novel of the people of Gettysburg in July, 1863, those people who were trapped in the cross-fire of the two warring armies. They cowered in their cellars while bullets ripped through their houses, and they crept out at nightfall to aid the wounded who crawled across their lawns. Yet, above all of them is the love story of Dan Bale and Irene Fanning, who give the book passion and beauty against a rich historic color.

THE GORGEOUS HUSSY

Then there is *The Gorgeous Hussy* by Samuel H. Adams. Peggy Eaton is the "hussy" who contrived to turn the politics of her day upside down and inside out. The era is that of the Jackson period and Mr. Adams has presented his story and considerable vitality and charm.

THE EVIL EMPRESS

Although I have not read it, I am told that *The Evil Empress* by Grand Duke Alexander of Russia is a good tale. It is a story of Catherine the Great, and the author is remembered by his first novel, *Once a Grand Duke*.

STRANGE HARVEST

I have read, however, Mrs. Inez H. Irwin's *Strange Harvest* which is a charming story of Charlestown, Massachusetts of the early Eighties. It relates the happenings of the seven Hart sisters, all in the autumn of life. Of course it is not a very riotous story, but it has that quality of calmness that is very acceptable and yet hard to find in the recent publications.

DOCTOR MARTINO

One of the most interesting collection of short stories to be published this spring is that by William Faulkner. Mr. Faulkner calls his edition *Doctor Martino*, which is the name of the first story in the book. There are some thirteen others there, however, and it seems to me that each one is better than the title story. Most of the list has been published in magazine form before, *Turnabout* coming from the *Saturday Evening Post* and also being made into a successful motion picture. Harper's, Scribner's and Story have furnished the larger part of the fourteen, but two of the stories, *Black Music* and *Leg*, appear in the edition for the first time.

I believe that the ones I enjoyed most were *Elly* and *Mountain Victory*, both with a Mississippi locale. Of course they are in the usual grim Falkner vein, superb in writing technique, and better than *Dry September* which was the best short story in his last similar volume out several years ago, *These 13*.

Elly deals with the young Southern white girl who falls in love with a young man of her small home town, a man who is supposed to have colored blood in his veins. The story reaches a terrible climax with the frightful plunge of a motor car in which they are riding, over a steep cliff. One last sees Elly mortally wounded, surrounded with the dead bodies of her grandmother and her lover. But it is not what Mr. Faulkner says as much as it is the way in which he says it.

ULYSSES

I see that James Joyce's *Ulysses* is on the carpet one again. *Ulysses*, you know, is the stream of consciousness novel which Mr. Joyce wrote some fifteen years ago, and which, because of its contents, was never allowed to be published in this country until last March. Its long pages, many of which are quite uninteresting, deal with the happenings of a Mr. Bloom during one twenty-four hours, and it was some of these incidents which the censors thought should not be placed in black and white before the American reading public.

Last January Judge John M. Woolsey handed down a decision, allowing publication in the United States, and since then the novel has had a moderate sale in the larger cities of the country. But recently, however, New York's Federal Attorney, Martin Conboy, says that the book "fairly reeks" with obscenity. Any one with a mature mind, I believe, knows that this statement is utter nonsense, and no one whose mind was not mature would have the patience to read far enough in the book to find those passages which Mr. Conboy insists are corrupting.

Just why the federal attorney should have felt it necessary to make an appeal is not apparent, despite the fact that most acts of censorship are rather irrational. It seems to me that the effort is to debase all literary appreciation to the level which appeals to the censor. Boston it was, you remember, that was laughed out of this very practice some five years ago. Let us hope that the same thing happens to this new attack on *Ulysses*.